



Hamilton Niagara Haldimand
Brant Regional Cancer Program
in partnership with Cancer Care Ontario

IMMUNOTHERAPY PATIENT EDUCATION

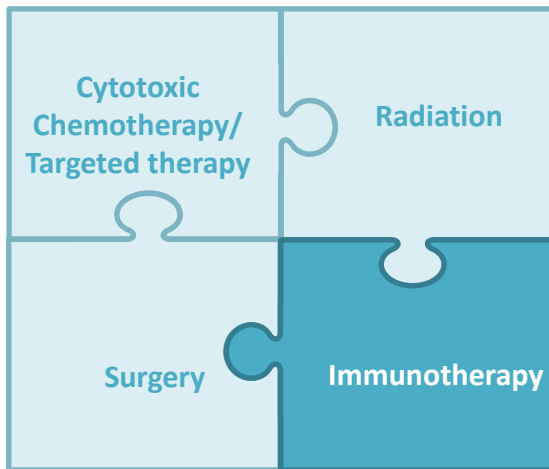
SESSION OVERVIEW

- What is immunotherapy?
- Possible side effects of immunotherapy
- Managing side effects
- Emergency situations
- Pregnancy and sex during treatment
- Important points about immunotherapy
- Resources and Supports



What is Immunotherapy?

- Immunotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses your own body's immune system to fight cancer.
- Immunotherapy is NOT chemotherapy



Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology, 2017.



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HOW DOES IMMUNOTHERAPY WORK?

Cancer cells find ways to protect themselves from your immune system.

Immunotherapy can:



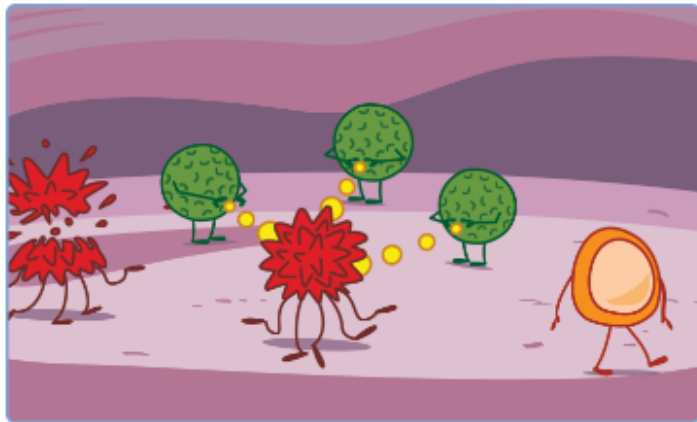
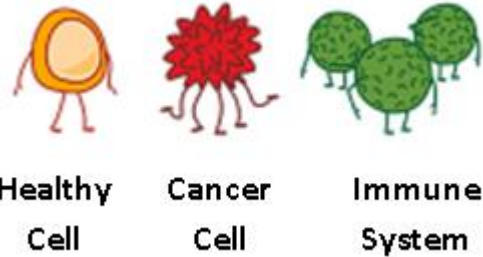
✓ mark or 'unhide' cancer cells so the body knows they are harmful and should be attacked



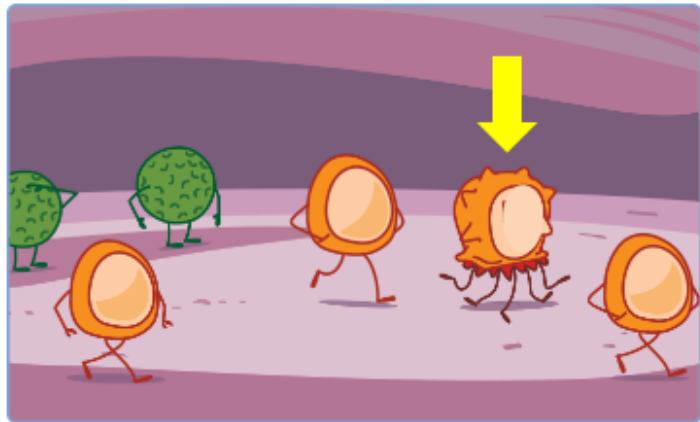
✓ boost your immune system, making it stronger to fight against the cancer cells



HOW DOES IMMUNOTHERAPY WORK?



When cancer cells appear in your body, your immune system works to recognize and attack them.

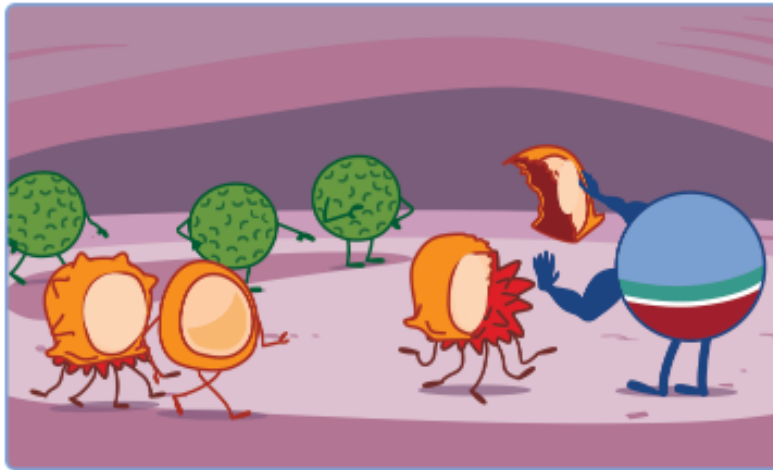


Cancer cells find ways to disguise themselves from the immune system.

HOW DOES IMMUNOTHERAPY WORK?



Immunotherapy



Immunotherapy drugs can remove the disguise...



...allowing the immune system to find and attack the cancer cells.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- Immunotherapy can cause your immune system to attack your healthy cells and cause inflammation.
- This inflammation can cause many types of symptoms in different parts of the body.

- It is important to understand the possible side effects so they can be treated early



POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

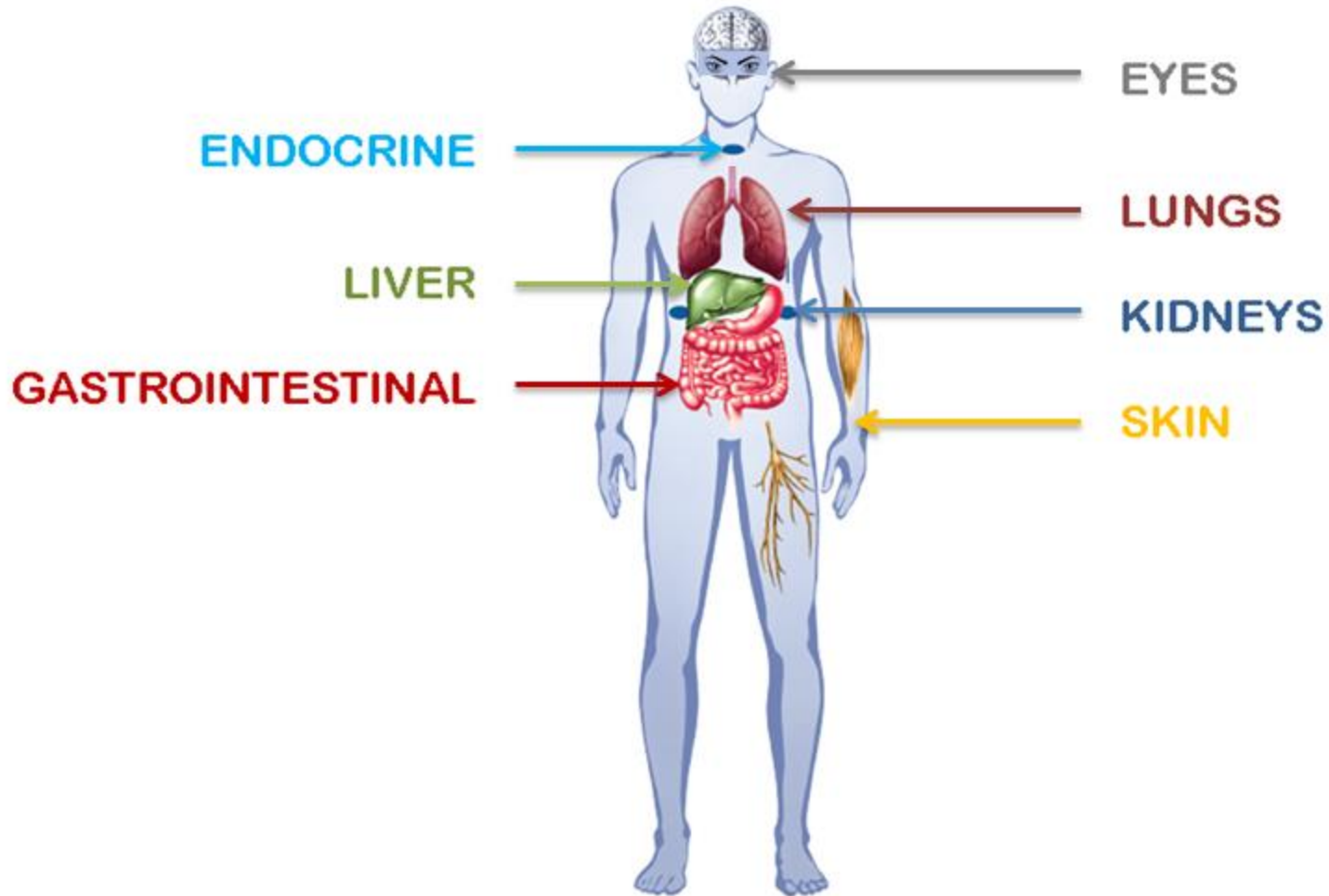


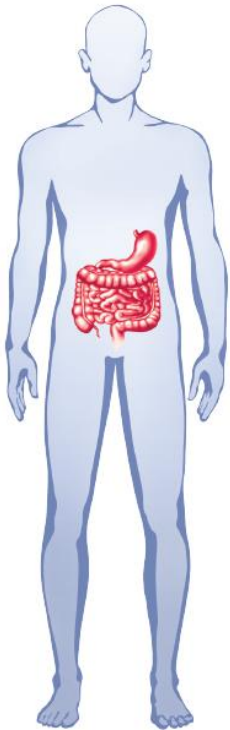
Image adapted from Bristol-Myers Squibb, 2011.



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GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM

- diarrhea (loose stools) or more bowel movements than usual
- blood in your stools or dark, tarry, sticky stools
- severe abdominal (stomach) pain or tenderness

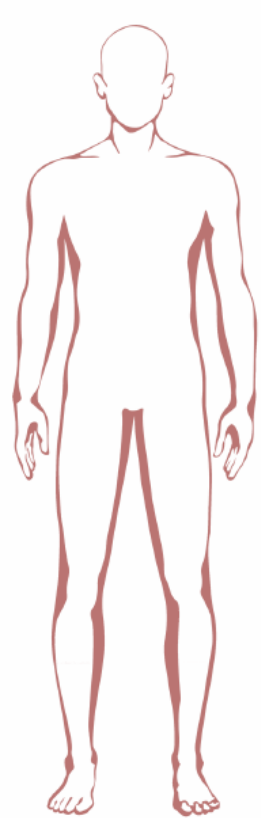


- If you develop diarrhea, contact your Cancer Care Team.
- If you cannot contact your Cancer Care Team and have 5 or more loose stools in 24 hours, go to the closest Emergency Department.
- Do **NOT** take anti-diarrhea medications without direction from your Cancer Care Team.



SKIN

- itching
- rash
- skin blistering or peeling

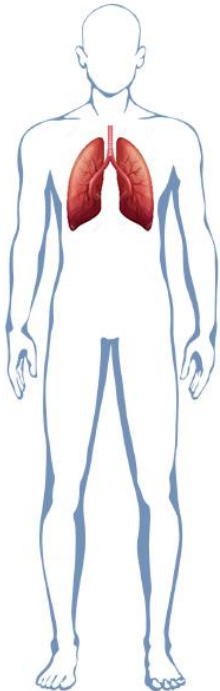


- If you develop a new rash, contact your Cancer Care Team.
- If you have a severe or painful rash, blistering or peeling skin, seek immediate medical attention.



LUNGS

- Changes in your breathing are uncommon but can be serious:
 - new or worsening cough
 - chest pain
 - shortness of breath

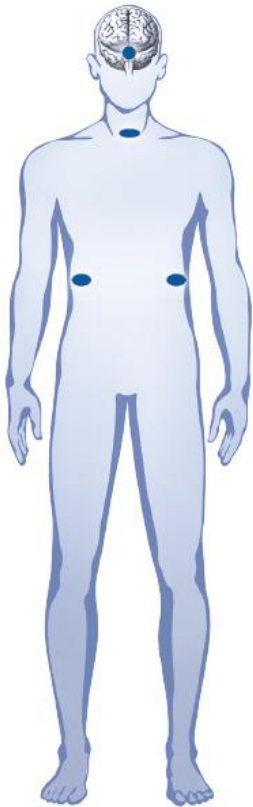


- Contact your Cancer Care Team if you develop worsening cough or shortness of breath.
- For chest pains, or sudden or severe shortness of breath, call 911.



ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

- also known as your hormonal glands
- side effects can vary, depending on the area of the body



Contact your Cancer Care Team if you experience any of the following symptoms:

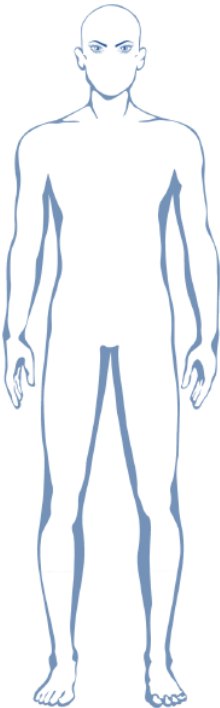
- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- weight gain or weight loss
- weakness, dizziness or fainting
- changes in mood or behaviour (irritability, forgetfulness)
- hair loss
- cold or heat sensitivity
- extreme thirst or lots of urine
- headaches that will not go away or unusual headaches



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EYES

- You should monitor your eyes for:
 - Redness or irritation
 - Pain
 - Blurry vision



- If you develop ANY symptoms, contact your Cancer Care Team.



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OTHER ORGANS

Blood tests will be done to see if there are any changes in how your liver and kidneys are working.

Liver:

- Yellow colour to your eyes or skin
- severe nausea or vomiting
- Stomach pain
- drowsiness
- dark urine (tea colored)
- bleeding or bruising more easily than normal

Kidneys:

- decrease in the amount of urine
- blood in your urine
- swelling in your ankles
- loss of appetite

- If you develop ANY symptoms, contact your Cancer Care Team.



MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS

- It is important to notify your Cancer Care Team **as soon as possible** if you notice any changes in your body.
- **Do NOT treat your side effects** without direction from your Cancer Care Team – please call your Cancer Care Team **first**.
- Your Cancer Care Team will decide the best way to manage your symptoms.
- In case of emergencies, please go to the Emergency Department. **Present your Immunotherapy Wallet Card.**



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EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Call 911 for emergencies

- Please tell emergency staff that you are on cancer treatment and present your **Immunotherapy Wallet Card**
- Tell the emergency doctor to contact your cancer doctor about your symptoms and care



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PREGNANCY AND SEX

- the effects of immunotherapy during pregnancy are not known
- immunotherapy may cause harm to the baby
- both men and women should use two methods of birth control (including condoms) during treatment and for 4-6 months AFTER the last dose of immunotherapy
- breastfeeding is NOT recommended



Immunotherapy Is NOT Chemotherapy

- some side effects of immunotherapy may be similar to those of chemotherapy, but they are **managed differently**
- side effects from immunotherapy can occur at **any time** during your treatment, and even several months **after treatment has stopped**
- it is important that side effects are reported to your Cancer Care Team **IMMEDIATELY**



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IMPORTANT POINTS

- Carry your **Immunotherapy Wallet Card** with you at all times
- Give the **Immunotherapy Wallet Card** to any other health care providers you see to make them aware of your treatment.
- Ask your Cancer Care Team about vaccinations **before** receiving them.



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Immunotherapy Video

[Click here to view video](#)



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Refer to your drug information sheets for more information about side effects.
- <http://www.freetobreathe.org/lung-cancer-info/treatment/treatment-options/immunotherapy>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=92&v=AbmEt_E8kfo



SURVEY

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